the mountain peoples, and the Yeti footprints can scarcely be confused with langur tracks. That the unique footprints may be the result of the high-altitude effects of evaporation and sublimation is not borne out by fresh Yeti tracks, where some detail of the foot is clear. High-altitude footprints do enlarge and may alter in shape, but this obvious alteration, which may surprise the casual traveler from the lowlands, is promptly recognized by an individual with experience in snow at high altitudes. It is not correct to assume that only the naive have seen the tracks, and it is equally erroneous to assume that the Yeti is only the imagined maker of all sorts of ablated footprints.

There has been a curious silence in the scientific literature concerning the two unusual scalps found in separate monasteries in the Khumbu region of eastern Nepal. A mammologist of the Zoological Survey of India, Biswamoy Biswas, has examined the scalps, and it has been demonstrated that they are not artifacts (*3*). Photographs of the scalps are quite remarkable in that they indicate a somewhat conical occipital extension, as if the skull possessed prominent temporal and nuchal crests. There is in the scalps the distinct suggestion of a large anthropoid ape. Coincidentally, the footprints photographed by Shipton closely resemble a cast of a foot of the mountain gorilla made by Carl Akeley in East Africa (*4*).

This cast, which was made on a dead specimen, exhibits a prominent hallux somewhat proximal to the remaining toes and perhaps more adducted than it would be in life. The line of toes arches in a slight semicircle, with the fifth digit close to and somewhat beneath the fourth digit, so that it could be inconspicuous in a footprint. The sole and heel of the foot are broad, with the lateral and medial borders approximately parallel. The general outline, the relationship of the hallux, the position and angle of the toes, and the inconspicuous fifth digit strongly suggest the Yeti footprint. Indeed, there are no other footprints which can approach the likeness of the Yeti track. Although it is true that foot impressions in the snow are open to wide subjective interpretation, it would seem to be a conservative assumption that the Yeti track, as it appears in good photographs, resembles Akeley's gorilla cast much more than it does any normal footprint of a bear.

In addition, there are reports of reversed "knuckle" prints such as might be made by an ape and, in fact, there are all sorts of tenuous indications from various Yeti tracks which can be interpreted to point toward the ape origin of the footprints. Among the apes, the mountain gorilla sometimes inhabits relatively high altitudes (its presence on snow fields has been recorded) in an alpine ecological zone not unlike that found in the Himalayas. The zoogeographical status of the eastern Himalayas as an area where relictual genera are frequent suggests that the existence of a relictual high-altitude ape with relatives in the tropics of Africa and Southern Asia is not an illogical supposition. Similar distributions are found among other mammal groups which at one time were widespread in Asia.

Whereas it is perhaps presumptuous to assume, at this time, that the Yeti is in reality some large anthropoid ape, it seems that this possibility has not been eliminated or sufficiently considered in the current arguments of the Yeti critics.

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I certainly have never denied the possibility of the existence of an "abominable snowman," whether it be a giant ape or some other unknown creature. I am only adhering to a basic tenet of scientific procedure when I ask for something in the way of positive proof of its reality. Unfortunately, those who claim to have seen the "snowman" seem never to have a rifle at hand, nor even a camera. Inference and argument are entertaining and admittedly suggestive; but the real proof of the pudding is in the eating thereof. Collateral evidence, such as footprints, is subject to diverse interpretations. In this connection, I cannot help but recall the "orang pendek" and the "Loch Ness monster." If someone supplies me with the cadaver of an undoubted "snowman," I will be only too glad to dissect it and report, to the best of my ability, on the creature's zoological affinities. Until such proof of its existence, or other proof which is just as convincing, is at hand, I reserve the right to be skeptical. Of particular pertinence in this instance is the observation of W. K. Brooks that "suspended judgment is the greatest triumph of intellectual discipline."

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